DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 153 717 PS 009 870

AUTHOR Montemayor, Raymond
TITLE Parental Disciplinary Technique and the Development of Children's Moral Judgment.
PUB DATE Mar 77
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (New Orleans, Louisiana, March 17-20, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Authoritarianism; *Discipline; *Elementary School Students; Fathers; *Moral Development; Mothers; *Parent Child Relationship; *Parent Influence; Perspective Taking; Research; Sex Differences
IDENTIFIERS *Moral Intentionality

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between parents' use of a person oriented disciplinary technique and their children's use of moral intentionality. Person oriented parents were characterized as those who emphasize their children's needs and intentions, in contrast to position oriented parents who expect children to adhere to socially accepted rules and to obey their parents because of the parents' inherent authority. Participants were 43 white, middle-class families: 21 families with a second grade girl and 22 families with a second grade boy. All testing was conducted in the child's home. Each child was given the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and was asked to rate the naughtiness of a story character in a series of story situations. A Moral Judgment Coefficient was then computed for each child as a quantitative measure of the extent to which the child used intent to evaluate the naughtiness of the story character. Each parent's social code was assessed by asking mothers and fathers to respond to four problem situations as if they were speaking directly to their child. The parents' responses were then recorded, transcribed, and scored for person orientation versus social rule (or position) orientation. Results indicated that the use of a person orientation by mothers was significantly related to the use of moral intentionality by their second grade sons or daughters. No relationship was found between fathers' social code and the type of moral judgment made by their children. (JMB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED153717

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

PARENTAL DISCIPLINARY TECHNIQUE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S MORAL JUDGMENT

RAYMOND MONTEMAYOR

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Raymond Montemayor

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, New Orleans, March, 1977.

PS 009870

Parental Disciplinary Technique and the Development of Children's Moral Judgment

A number of investigators have confirmed Piaget's proposition that young children make moral judgments primarily based on the consequences of an action, while older children make judgments based on the intentions of the actor (Lickona, 1976). Children's use of moral intentionality has been shown to be positively related to advanced cognitive development (Lee, 1971). However, little is known about the possible importance of such social factors as different types of parent-child interactions, despite the fact that Piaget has indicated that such interactions may be important. For example: "There is no doubt that by adopting a certain technique with their children, parents can succeed in making them attach more importance to intention than to rules conceived as a system of ritual interdictions" (Piaget, 1965, p. 137). The purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship between a particular type of parental disciplinary technique and children's use of moral intentionality.

Bernstein (1972) has classified families into two types based on the interaction patterns that are characteristic of the members of each type of family. In a position oriented family, relations between parents and children are based on ascribed status; children are expected to adhere to the socially accepted rules and norms appropriate for children and to respect and obey their parents because of the inherent authority which parents possess. In contrast, person oriented parents are characterized by a concern for the needs, motives, and intentions of their children. Parents hold few normative expectations for their children but emphasize instead their childrens' underlying needs and intentions. These two types of interaction patterns orient the child to two different aspects of the social situation -- social rules or the intentions of actors. It is therefore

hypothesized that young children with person oriented parents will use moral intentionality to a greater extent than children with position oriented parents.

Method

Subjects. Forty-three families participated in this in-home study -- 21 families with a second grade girl (mean age 7.9 yrs.), and 22 families with a second grade boy (mean age 8.0 yrs.). The families were white and middle-class as determined by father's education and family neighborhood.

Procedure. All testing was conducted in the child's home. Each child was first administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT). Moral intentionality was assessed using a procedure adapted from Hebble (1971). Each child rated the naughtiness of a story character on a 4-point scale from "not bad" to "very, very bad." Three different story situations were used and each story had four variations: good intention -- low damage; good intention -- high damage; bad intention -- low damage; bad intention -- high damage.

A Moral Judgment Coefficient (MJC) was computed for each child in order to obtain a quantitative measure of the extent to which a child used intent to evaluate the naughtiness of a story character. The MJC is an improvement and refinement of Hebble's original Intent Judgment Quotient (Hebble, 1971). The MJC varies along a continuum from -1 (answers based entirely on damage) to 0 (answers based equally on intent and damage) to 1+ (answers based entirely on intent). Table 1 illustrates the computation of the Moral Judgment Coefficient.

Insert Table 1 about here

Each parent's social code was assessed using a procedure adpated from Bearison and Cassel (1975). Mothers and fathers were individually asked to respond to the following four situations involving their child: (1) Your child

stole something from a neighbor; (2) Your child stole a toy from a store; (3) Your child does not want to go to bed but wants to stay up late and watch TV instead; (4) Your child does not want to go to school. Parents were asked to respond to each situation as though they were speaking directly to their child. Responses were recorded and later transcribed.

Responses that explicitly expressed the feelings, thoughts, needs, or intentions of individuals (either parents', child's or another person involved in the situation) were scored as person oriented. Responses that expressed a social rule, or a resort to authority were scored as position oriented. Interjudge agreement was determined by having two judges independently score 45 responses. Interjudge agreement for person and position orientation was 96%.

Results

A significant sex difference was found for MJC scores: male ($\bar{X}$ = .27, SD = .37); female ($\bar{X}$ = .05, SD = .27); t (41) = 2.44, $p < .02$. Male children made moral judgments based on intentionality to a greater extent than did female children. This difference does not appear to be the result of differences in intellectual ability since there were no significant sex differences in IQ scores on the PPVT. Mean IQ for male children was 110.6 (SD = 15.2) and for female children, 107.7 (SD = 11.3). IQ correlated nonsignificantly with MJC for both males (r = .21) and females (r = -.16).

The mean percentage of person oriented responses given by parents for each story is illustrated in Table 2. A single social code score was calculated for each parent based on the percentage of person oriented responses obtained for all four stories. These social code scores were analyzed in a 2 x 2 analysis of variance with sex of parent and sex of child as factors. There was a significant sex of parent effect for social code score. Mothers' mean score was 48.01 (SD = 22.15),

and fathers' mean score was 38.24 (SD = 21.29); $F(1, 82) = 4.26$, $p < .05$. Mothers were more person oriented than were fathers. Mothers' social code correlated nonsignificantly with fathers' social code for both sons ($r = .27$) and daughters ($r = -.08$). No other effect was significant.

Insert Table 2 about here

The correlations between the social code scores of the parents and their child's MJC and IQ are given in Table 3. The data indicate that a significant relationship exists between the social code of mothers and their sons' MJC ($r = .50$, $p < .02$), and between mothers and their daughters MJC ($r = .57$, $p < .01$). No significant relationship was found between fathers' social code scores and either sons' or daughters' MJC. None of the above relationships were significantly altered when childrens' IQ was partialed out.

Insert Table 3 about here

Multiple correlation coefficients were computed on the combined parent scores and their child's MJC. The multiple R's for parent-son ($R = .50$) and parent-daughter ($R = .58$) were not significantly different from the correlation between mother and child, indicating that fathers' social code scores contributed little to the prediction of child's MJC.

These data indicate that the use of a person orientation by mothers was significantly related to the use of moral intentionality by their second grade sons or daughters. No relationship was found between fathers' social code and the type of moral judgment made by their children.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that children with person oriented mothers use intentionality as a criterion for making moral judgments to a greater extent than

children with position oriented mothers. Perhaps the mother's emphasis on the intentions of her child sensitizes the child to the importance of this kind of information and stimulates the development of the child's ability to take into account the intentions of others.

The data from the present study, along with Bearison and Cassel's (1975) finding that children with person oriented mothers show greater evidence of communication accommodation to the needs of their listener than children with position oriented mothers, indicate that a mother's social code may be implicated in the development of many aspects of her children's social cognitions.

This study raises a number of important questions that need to be answered with future research. First, the relationship between parents' verbal responses and their actual behavior when in similar situations needs to be assessed. Second, since all of these data are only correlational, the direction of the effect cannot be determined and it is possible that once children begin to use advanced social cognitions their parents shift from a position to a person oriented social code. Third, what importance the father's social code may have in his child's social cognitive development remains to be answered.

References

Bearison, D. J., & Cassel, T. Z. Cognitive decentration and social codes: Communicative effectiveness in young children from differeing family contexts. Developmental Psychology, 1975, 11, 29-36.

Bernstein, B. Social class, language and socialization. In P. Giglioli (Eds.), Language and social context. Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1972.

Hebble, P. W. The development of elementary school children's judgment of intent. Child Development, 1971, 42, 1203-1215.

Lee, L. C. The concomitant development of cognitive and moral modes of thought: A text of selected deductions from Piaget's theory. Genetic Psychology Monographs, 1971, 83, 93-146.

Lickona, T. Research on Piaget's theory of moral development. In T. Lickona (Ed.), Moral development and behavior. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976.

Piaget, J. The moral judgment of the child. New York: The Free Press, 1965.

TABLE 1

Moral Judgment Story Combinations

Intention \ Damage	Lo	Hi
Bad	D	[redacted]
Good	C	B

Moral Judgment Coefficient

$$MJC = \frac{\left|(A+D) - (B+C)\right| - \left|(A+B) - (C+D)\right|}{Total}$$

$$= \frac{\left|\text{Bad I} - \text{Good I}\right| - \left|\text{High D} - \text{Low D}\right|}{Total}$$

TABLE 2

Mean Percentage of Person Oriented Responses

Story	Son		Daughter	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
1	57.7	40.0	50.6	46.9
2	39.1	32.8	32.8	28.5
3	46.7	28.2	36.8	27.4
4	50.7	50.4	60.9	49.5

Story

1) Stole present from neighbor's house.
2) Stole toy from store.
3) TV and bed.
4) School.

TABLE 3

Parents' Social Code and Sons' MJC and IQ (N=22)

	Mother	Father	Son (MJC)	Son (IQ)
Mother	-	.27	.50 *	.25
Father		-	.12	-.01
Son (MJC)			-	.21

* $p < .02$

Parents' Social Code and Daughters' MJC and IQ (N=21)

	Mother	Father	Daughter (MJC)	Daughter (IQ)
Mother	-	-.08	.57 **	.06
Father		-	.08	.20
Daughter (MJC)			-	-.16

** $p < .01$

A final point concerns additional ways in which collateral information plays a role: It may well increase the ease with which a child can rely on analogies and reduce new problems to other, more familiar situations and may also enable him to make new information (or solutions) substantially richer and more useful by having it be related to previously acquired systems of information.

Summary

We have made two related arguments in this paper. The first is that task extrinsic rewards have limited utility as a didactic device. To begin with, they appear to limit the student's engagement in an activity, to constrain what is learned from the activity and to affect the student's desire to return to the activity when free to do so. Moreover, in addition to affecting the students who receive them, these same rewards also have undesirable effects on the teachers who have to dispense them. The related argument is that a reliance on extrinsic rewards is not the only educational option. One can rely, as well, on: the child's intrinsic motivation to pursue questions about the way the world is organized and about how this organization can be explained; his tendency to fully explore situations in order to achieve answers to these questions; and, his interest in exploring the answers or solutions to these questions and, presumably, in setting these answers within a broader context.

If the child is indeed eager to learn and is also capable of doing so, then extrinsic rewards ought to be supplemented by educational opportunities that take advantage of this intrinsic interest and capacity.